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197 one with the Holy Virgin. St. Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St. George with Linglessou, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word *zange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one loa, sometimes with another.

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197 No one in Haiti knows all the loa. Some of them are so ancient as to be nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the part of a possessed person. Some loa names may be the result of a devotee's seizing upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the concept of a loa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *langage* is taken to be a loa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a loa.

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198 The possibility of frequent additions to the list of loa is heightened still further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single loa's name may have several forms. One may well wonder whether Aza, Adja, and Akadja were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

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552 There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-nan-Mer—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

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Norman French became the dominant tongue of the French buccaneers. Words were naturally added from the patois of the neighboring French provinces of Picardy, Brittany, and Anjou, but Norman remained the matrix.³ With La Tortue as their home base, the buccaneers roamed the Caribbean, coming into constant contact with other people—contact which left its mark, as meetings generally do, upon the speech of the travelers.

There were still Indians left in some of the islands, and Indians outnumbered Spaniards on the mainland. From these aborigines Créole borrowed many individual words, these being generally the names of things—flora and fauna, food, objects of daily life more or less common throughout the Caribbean world.⁴ The grammatical contributions of the Indians were apparently only an emphasis upon tendencies already present in Norman French, such as that of keeping the verb form constant while making other words in the sentence do the work of indicating past, present, or future, continuous or completed action, and the like.

Engaged in buccaneering with the French were hundreds of English privateers. Often English and French raided in partnership; for many years both groups shared La Tortue. This contact left a heavy mark upon Créole—a congenial one, indeed, for Norman French had been for more than four centuries the official language of England. Now in the seventeenth century English was giving back to Norman many words in exchange for the ones it had taken.⁵ More important than its verbal gift, however, was the influence it exerted toward a simple syntax. As compared with French forms,

3. An outstanding linguist, Jules Faine, in *Philologie créole*, p. 1, estimates that three out of four words in Créole are Norman.

4. A very few of these Indian words have become familiar in French, and still fewer in English; but one finds most of them, in one form or another, in the whole Caribbean basin. Examples are:

agouti, a small rodent
atouton, a dish whose base is corn
caiman, alligator
igouane, a large lizard
avocat, the avocado pear
calabasse, calabash
cerecel, a green prickly fruit
gouyave, guava
guane, yam

hamac, hammock
ouragan, hurricane
bayahonde, a very hard wood
campêche, another hard wood
maouya, small lizard
barbacue, barbecue
cassave, a starch plant
lambi, a mollusk or conch
tom-tom, a purée of bananas

5. Henry Moiry, *Glossaire comparatif Anglo-Normand* (Caen, 1863), points out that the modern Norman dialect contains more than 5,000 words common to English and Norman, but not recognized in official French.

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175 if a blow were given on the face the word "pimme" was added to the
 192 verb describing that blow, but if a stick had been used, "bimme" was added, and if a whip, then "v'lap v'lap."

175 One of the Negro contributions which gives a delightful charm to
 the language is the principle of doubling, whether the word is
 193 adjective, adverb, verb, or pronoun. Faine cites the following examples:

ioun bel, bel femme—an extraordinarily beautiful woman.

li té bien, bien malade—he was very gravely ill.

li marcher, l'marcher, l'marcher—he kept on walking and walking.

li-minme, li-minme—it is really he himself.⁸

175 Still another and very important Negro contribution is the wealth
 538 of proverbs. A person may say practically anything he chooses in proverbs, particularly if he uses to its fullest the significant tones of which his voice is capable. As many as 1,500 of these proverbs have been collected, and there is reason to believe that as many more could be found.⁹ In general they say the same things proverbs say in any language:

Fer couper fer. Il faut du fer pour couper le fer; which is to signify, "Great needs demand great remedies."

Tit cochon tit sang. Un petit cochon a peu de sang; that is, "From each according to his means."

Sel pas besoin vanter tête li. Le sel n'a pas besoin de se vanter; or, "Real merit never needs to boast."

Since some of the proverbs make allusions to elephants and tigers, animals not found in the Caribbean region, it is clear that these at least, and maybe others, go far back in the wisdom of the folk.

538 Storytelling is a well-cultivated art in Haiti. The folklore of Créole is rich, some of it bearing close resemblance to the Negro tales current in the southern United States, particularly the Br'er Rabbit tales. When a group gathers and a story is about to begin, the teller says, "Cric!"—as if to say, "Shall I tell you a story?" or, "Are you ready?" To this his listeners reply, "Crac!"—or, "Please do! Certainly!" or, "We are listening." The two words together make a sort of rapport between raconteur and audience, an overture, "Once upon a time."

8. Faine, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

9. J. J. Audain, *Proverbes* (Port-au-Prince, 1877), cites 1,011 Haitian proverbs in Créole, and E. Chenet, *Proverbes créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1896), records 1,456 proverbs.

Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite
304 speak THE HAITIAN PEOPLE French

197 and where French is taught in the schools, the Créole is less "pure"
191 than in the untutored countryside. Even there the language is chang-
193 ing, for there is steadily operating that "law of simplification" which
reduces the complications of language when it has only an oral
tradition." Abridgment occurs more and more frequently, aggluti-
nation is more apparent, and words tend toward the monosyllabic.

191 Everyone in Haiti speaks and understands Créole. Nursemaids
197 teach it to their élite charges, so that children know it from infancy;
élite lovers lapse into its expressive phrases in order to say something
particularly intimate which might sound sentimental in French;
priests must use it in their parish work if they are to be understood at
all. Even the élite presidents have found it wise to speak often to the
countrypeople in their own tongue. The gendarmes would be help-
less in their police work without it, as would the agricultural, health,
and other governmental services. It is the language in which all the
small business of Haiti is conducted.¹³ Ernest Douyon has written
brilliantly and revealingly about it:

If, on the one hand, we have a business language, an official tongue, which
is French, our true maternal language, on the other hand, that one which
we first lisp, that of the country as a whole (I had almost said "of the true
country," for such is the case), that of the city people as well as of country-
folk, that of all families whatever their differences in education, the lan-
guage one hears not only in humble huts but in luxurious villas, not only
in offices or among the masses but also in private apartments and salons,
that which for the crudest as for the most finely cultivated minds (even
when these latter through snobbery try to deny the fact) is at all times the
most naturally expressive, that which perfectly translates our deepest
sentiments (jubilation, anger, love, or whatever) precisely when these are
most strongly felt, that which all of us, all (with the rarest exceptions) use
spontaneously—is Créole! I know that it is not considered proper in polite
society, that it sometimes lends a certain impression of vulgarity, that it is
not the correct language for distinguished people—when they are in pub-
lic! But who is the man of propriety, who the society woman, who in
private does not continually use Créole?¹⁴

12. See P. Crouzet, *Les Ponts romains* (Toulouse, 1939), p. 18.

13. It must be noted that in the Vodun service the houngan sometimes speaks in
language, which is not Créole. It purports to be pure African, but is more likely to be
mere gibberish.

14. In his Preface to *Faina*, *op. cit.*, p. v.

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